United Nations S/2011/562

Security Council

Distr.: General
8 September 2011

Original: English

Letter dated 8 September 2011 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit the attached letter dated 2 September 2011, from the Deputy Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Mr. Claudio Bisogniero, transmitting a report on the International Security Assistance Force operations in Afghanistan, covering the period from 1 May to 31 July 2011 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would bring the present letter and its annex to the attention of the members of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

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Annex

Letter dated 2 September 2011 from the Deputy Secretary General of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization addressed to the Secretary-General

In accordance with Security Council resolutions 1386 (2001) and 1943 (2010), I attach a report on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan covering the period from May 2011 to July 2011 (see enclosure). I would appreciate your making the report available to the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Claudio **Bisogniero**

Enclosure

Quarterly report to the Security Council on the operations of the International Security Assistance Force

Introduction

1. The present report, pursuant to the request under Security Council resolutions 1386 (2001) and 1943 (2010), informs the United Nations on the progress of the mission of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF), covering the period from 1 May to 31 July 2011. As at 2 August 2011, total ISAF strength stood at 130,804 personnel provided by all 28 North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) nations and 20 non-NATO nations. NATO and ISAF invite additional United Nations Member States to support this United Nations-mandated mission by providing mentors and trainers for the Afghan National Security Forces, as well as increased support for the civilian sectors of governance and development.

2. Throughout the reporting period, ISAF continued to assist the Government of Afghanistan in accordance with relevant Security Council resolutions. From 1 May to 31 July 2011, ISAF suffered 2,013 casualties, including 149 killed in action, 1,839 wounded in action and 25 non-battle-related deaths.

3. The reporting period was marked by a number of noteworthy events with an overall trend towards the positive. The death of Osama bin Laden had limited operational implications for the ISAF mission; e.g., temporarily stalling the tripartite military consultations between Afghan, Pakistan and ISAF representatives. With the fighting season at full pace, the insurgents were under constant pressure by combined Afghan National Security Forces and ISAF operations. This quarter saw a definite increase in high profile attacks and emplacement of improvised explosive devices, while there was an overall decrease in enemy-initiated attacks when compared to the same time last year. With the commencement of transition to Afghan National Security Forces lead security on 22 July, the reporting period witnessed the most significant milestone achieved for Afghanistan by the international community so far. The ceremonies led by the Government of Afghanistan saw little or no interference by the insurgents. Additional noteworthy events for this reporting period were:

(a) On 28 May, the Military Police School, the last of the Afghan National Security Forces 12 branch schools opened. Courses will train Afghan National Army military police officers, non-commissioned officer leaders, working-dog handlers, counter-terrorism quick response specialists and protective service personnel;

(b) On 28 June, the Security Standing Committee of the Joint Coordination Monitoring Board confirmed an international joint consensus to increase the Afghan National Security Forces strength to 352,000 personnel by October 2012. This will include growth in the Afghan National Army strength to 195,000 and the Afghan National Police to 157,000. Therefore, Although the full Joint Coordination Monitoring Board still needs to endorse the request when it meets in October, the growth of the Afghan National Security Forces beyond the currently agreed 305,600 is ensured;

(c) On 29 June, the first working group of the Afghanistan Pakistan Joint Commission for Peace was held in Kabul. Pakistan reaffirmed its support for an

Afghan-led and Afghan-owned peace and reconciliation process and its readiness to encourage and facilitate an all-inclusive process;

(d) On 4 July 11, the NATO Rule of Law Field Support Mission was stood up in Afghanistan and is now operating under NATO auspices but currently relying on United States personnel who had been already deployed in theatre as part of the Rule of Law Field Force — Afghanistan. However, the NATO Rule of Law Field Support Mission positions are available for national contributions from the international community. The Mission provides essential field capabilities, liaison and security to Afghan and international civilian providers of technical assistance supporting the building of Afghan criminal justice capacity, increasing access to dispute resolution services, fighting corruption and thereby helping to improve the legitimacy of the Afghan Government, key elements to an irreversible transition process;

(e) On 12 July, Ahmed Wali Karzai, half-brother of President Karzai and former Head of the Kandahar Provincial Council, was assassinated by an Afghan National Police commander who was well known by Ahmed Wali Karzai and his family. He was assassinated in his home in Kandahar, and his death will likely require decisive actions from the Government of Afghanistan to fill the gap with legitimate and accountable Government of Afghanistan officials in Kandahar Province;

(f) On 25 and 26 July, after a 10-month period of inactivity, the Afghan Government and international community representatives reaffirmed their commitment to the Kabul Process by convening a series of standing committee meetings. The standing committees reviewed the planning process for governance and socio-economic national priority programmes and worked to define measurable and achievable development objectives. Officials agreed to meet again in September.

Security situation

4. Enabled by the surge in military resources, ISAF and its Afghan partners achieved their goals for 2010, pressuring the insurgents to such a degree that they were prevented from recuperating and preparing for the 2011 fighting season. Significant cache finds, degraded command and control structures, and interdiction of supply lines and personnel losses resulted in an ineffective beginning of the fighting season in mid-May. The insurgents were generally unable to contest the progress made by the Afghan National Security Forces and ISAF during the spring, and were instead forced to focus on defending their remaining safe havens and freedom of movement. Unable to execute offensive military operations, the insurgents were increasingly forced to rely on the occasional high profile attack. These attacks were often perpetrated against "soft targets" like Government of Afghanistan officials, off-duty Afghan National Security Forces personnel or civilian infrastructure, and often resulted in substantial numbers of civilian casualties.

5. The Afghan National Security Forces effectively countered most insurgent attacks. One example is the Kandahar Intercontinental Hotel complex attack (19 May 2011), which the insurgents intended to be the opening attack of the spring fighting season. However, that event did not meet its objectives and resulted in considerable insurgent losses. It should be noted that the ability and willingness of

the insurgents to fight, although diminished, is still present and they are still able to maintain some semblance of command and control. ISAF assesses that significant kinetic activity will take place over the summer, but with a greater number of lulls between attacks as the insurgents are increasingly forced to rest and resupply more frequently due to the increased Afghan National Security Forces and ISAF footprint and high operational tempo. It should also be noted that the insurgents are assessed to be incapable of derailing the transition process. Other promising signs were visible as well. For example, more and more local Afghans tipped ISAF and Afghan National Security Forces on the location of improvised explosive devices and weapon caches; village and tribal elders increasingly engaged with ISAF, the Afghan National Security Forces and the Government of Afghanistan on local governance and development issues and polls continued to show that the majority of the Afghan population supports ISAF and Afghan National Security Forces and the work they do.

6. Regionally, the security situation can be described as follows:

(a) Regional Command Capital. The security situation in Kabul City and Province remained unchanged and can best be described as stable. The occasional insurgent attack did take place, but when it did, the Afghan National Security Forces reacted effectively. Although these attacks created significant media attention, they did not alter the security situation;

(b) Regional Command North. Although a number of high profile insurgent-initiated security incidents took place, the overall security situation remained stable (not all security incidents can be attributed to the Afghan insurgency);

(c) Regional Command West. Continuing ISAF and Afghan National Security Forces operations reduced the insurgents' freedom of movement, and the complex attack on 30 May 2011 against the Provincial Reconstruction Team Camp in Herat City was effectively countered by the Afghan National Security Forces, supported by ISAF;

(d) Regional Command South. The Afghan National Security Forces showed its increasing capabilities by successfully countering the beginning of the insurgency 2011 fighting season, thereby preserving the hard fought progress made in 2009 and 2010. The overall security situation appears to be improving and insurgent networks are experiencing similar difficulties in leadership and logistics as those seen in Regional Command South-West;

(e) Regional Command South-West. Having successfully cleared Central Helmand, the Afghan National Security Forces and ISAF commenced operations to clear the remaining insurgent sanctuaries in Helmand. The Afghan National Security Forces and ISAF special operations forces continued to interdict the insurgent's logistical bases in the south of Helmand, causing significant logistical and financial challenges for the insurgency;

(f) Regional Command East. The eastern part of Afghanistan, bordering the federally administered tribal areas of Pakistan, remains an important area for the insurgency providing the link between external sanctuaries and Kabul City. Having successfully interdicted traditional insurgent safe havens and supply routes, the Afghan National Security Forces and ISAF forced the insurgents to redirect their effort towards re-establishing infiltration routes and maintaining safe havens.

Subsequently, Regional Command East witnessed the highest number of security incidents.

Afghan National Security Forces

7. The Afghan National Security Forces continues to make steady progress towards October 2011 goals. The capability and capacities of the Ministry of Defence and Ministry of the Interior to man, train, equip and support their police and soldiers improved. The training capacity of the Afghan National Security Forces has continued to grow, with more than 35,000 soldiers and police officers to be participating in various training programmes by the end of July 2011.

8. The Afghan National Security Forces structure goal of 305,600 for October 2011 is close to being met. Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police recruiting programmes are on track to achieve their targets of 171,600 and 134,000, respectively. The Afghan National Security Forces in general is becoming more and more capable as the number of its units with high effectiveness ratings (higher rated than "Effective with Advisors") continues to rise, as does the number of Afghan-led operations. The efforts to train Afghan trainers are also progressing well. ISAF anticipates that the train-the-trainer system will reach full output next year. This programme will allow Afghans to assume more responsibility for training the Afghan National Security Forces. By the end of the reporting period, the 100,000th student graduated from the Afghan National Security Forces literacy training programme, a notable milestone for continued professionalization of the Afghan National Security Forces.

Afghan National Army

9. The Afghan National Army remains the most robust and capable organization within the Afghan National Security Forces. The last Infantry Kandak (battalion) of the overall 171,600 Afghan National Army structure has been fielded, and efforts continue with the fielding of combat support and combat service support units and the further development of the medical and logistics branches to make the army more balanced and sustainable. Likewise, all of the 12 Afghan National Army branch schools are now open. The effectiveness of the Afghan National Army fielded forces is continuously increasing, and close to three quarters of assessed units and headquarters are now rated as either effective with advisers or effective with assistance. Afghan National Army training seats are used effectively, with close to 100 per cent of what is available in use. Of importance, the increasing number of Afghan trainers is slowly but steadily improving the Afghan National Army capacity to train independently in the medium term.

10. The Afghan National Army is on the glide path for achieving the October 2011 goal of 171,600 soldiers by August 2011. This positive trend is fostered mainly by strong recruitment coupled with improved retention rates. However, attrition remains a constant concern for sustainability and professional development. The October 2012 target for the Afghan National Army has been increased to 195,000 soldiers, which requires a close look into the requirement for mentoring of these expanded Afghan National Army structures in the challenging transition period.

11. Despite the good results, there is no change in the challenges remaining in the fielded Afghan National Army: leadership deficits, high attrition, capability deficits in the areas of staff planning, Tactical Operations Centre management and logistics.

Afghan Air Force

12. The Afghan Air Force is at a critical point in its development. In the past year the Afghan Air Force has seen significant growth, but will continue to be challenged over the next two years, when an additional 72 aircraft are planned to enter its fleet. Current practices and recent history raises serious questions on the Afghan Air Force's ability to manage this increased fleet size and to further develop the overall force. Through this rapid increase in inventory, the Afghan Air Force's ability to professionally operate, train, maintain and sustain the aircraft has not kept pace. The ability to effectively operate several different aircraft types goes well beyond developing individual skill-sets. It requires a professional and transparent organization as its foundation. Accountability also enables better planning and efficient training. As the Afghan Air Force continues to expand across Afghanistan, it is increasingly important to understand the training requirements at its wings and detachments. NATO Training Mission-Afghanistan, and the number of air trainers is underresourced. Despite these shortfalls and challenges, the Afghan Air Force assumed an important support role during the transition ceremonies, transporting Afghan dignitaries. Furthermore, they moved more than 3,500 lbs of humanitarian aid and educational supplies to Badakhshan Province.

Afghan National Police

13. The Afghan National Police strength grew by close to 4,000 this quarter, expanding the force to 130,622. Overall, the Afghan National Police continued to make progress towards its future October 2011 target of 134,000, with around 10,000 police officers currently assigned to various training programmes. Greater emphasis is being put on professionalizing the force through developing leadership and providing training to all members of the force. The main focus now is closing the deficiency of the non-commissioned officers by the end of 2012.

14. As the transition process continues, another focal point for a self-sustaining force is, as with the Afghan National Army, to expand the existing pool of Afghan trainers for the Afghan National Police. The aim is to have a fully developed instructor production system in place within the next 12 months. Cooperation between different entities of the international community dealing with Afghan National Police development, such as the European Union Police Mission and the German Police Project Team is increasing, which will further contribute to developing a self-sufficient Afghan National Police. On 17 May, the International Police Coordination Board endorsed two initiatives aiming at enhancing the professionalization of the Police Force from the strategic through the tactical level — the police officer on the ground; first, the implementation of an institutional and police policy development framework and second, the establishment of an international advisory council. It was also announced that the basic patrolman induction training would be increased from six to eight weeks.

15. On 28 July, an Afghan National Police Officer candidate course began in Sivas, Turkey, with 492 Afghan students at what is the largest Afghan National Police training programme outside Afghanistan. Programmes abroad such as this one provide another means of enhancing professional development of the forces.

Institutional capacity

16. In June, the Minister of Defence convened a seminar with the Ministry of Defence and general staff senior leadership to discuss the Operations and Functions Manual (OFM). Adopted in March, the Manual provides institutional and managerial direction by delineating the tasks, organization, roles and responsibilities of the Ministry and the Afghan National Army. The Afghan National Army hosted its first planned, led and facilitated logistics conference, a two-day seminar that included 300 Afghan National Army officers and focused on identifying "Afghan National Army solutions to Afghan challenges" and improving operations. This was the first such Afghan-led event on this topic. The Afghan National Army Recruiting Command has already been assessed as being able to accomplish its mission with coalition oversight only. Pending approval, the Command will be the first Ministry of Defence department to enter the transition process. The Ministry of the Interior is assessed to require some coalition assistance by the end of 2011 and beyond. Since the last report, the Ministry of the Interior's force readiness capability milestone rating has improved to that level. The public affairs directorate has been assessed as being able to accomplish its mission with coalition oversight only and, like the Afghan National Army Recruiting Command, is awaiting approval for transition to Afghan lead.

Private security companies

17. In early May, the Ministry of the Interior signed the Bridging Tashkil procedures for those private security companies needing more than 500 personnel. This important step now offers the way for the private security companies concerned to complete their contractual commitments. While diplomatic entities will be able to contract private security companies as long as necessary, development entities and ISAF will be able to continue with contract private security companies throughout the one-year bridging period, but will migrate to the use of the Afghan Public Protection Force at the end of the bridging strategy in March 2012. In addition, the Ministry of the Interior private security company office has received direction to re-license the 26 private security companies that have completed all respective requirements and that have no outstanding fines. Private security companies with licences will be able to accept new contracts. As at the end of the reporting period, three private security companies had completed bridging procedures totalling approximately 2,100 personnel. Issues remain surrounding weapons procurement, distribution and transfer, as well as identifying private security companies with Bridging Tashkil personnel and recruitment of Afghan Public Protection Force personnel.

18. Following the Ministry of the Interior's recent decision that the Afghan Public Protection Force will be a State-owned enterprise, it is now recruiting business experts to advise on the business model to be adopted. The training facility and infrastructure is now in place at the Afghan Public Protection Force Regional Training Centre in Bagrami District, Kabul Province, with training of the first Afghan Public Protection Force students having begun on 16 July. This is an important step in building the capability of the Afghan Public Protection Force and increasing the confidence of development agencies that their projects will be secure in the future.

Afghan Local Police

19. The Ministry of the Interior-led Afghan Local Police programme continues to increase in strength and effectiveness. As at 4 August 2011, there were 43 Afghan Local Police districts validated as operational by the Government of Afghanistan. The total number of Afghan Local Police personnel is now close to 7,400, further improving the security situation and the public perception of the Afghan Local Police. Over the past six months, the Afghan Local Police sustained a growth rate of more than 14 per cent per month. The Afghan Local Police programme linkages to local communities make it difficult for the Taliban to stage attacks on the Afghan Local Police and their home villages, since the majority of Taliban come from the same villages and fight within 10 kilometres of their homes. Taliban leaders are increasingly recruiting out-of-area fighters for this purpose — a tactic that has the potential to antagonize Afghans in protected villages. The largest Afghan Local Police programme in Afghanistan, Marjah District in Helmand Province, now has more than 400 patrolmen in this traditional insurgent safe haven.

Civilian casualties

20. Independent reporting continues to show that the insurgents cause more than 80 per cent of all civilian casualties. The number of ISAF-caused civilian casualties has been further reduced, with June 2011 being one of the lowest months for ISAF-caused civilian casualties in the last four years. The ISAF Commander has continued to reduce ISAF-caused civilian casualties with constant reference to his directives. He also directed that a civilian casualties mitigation conference be convened with participation from ISAF, the Government of Afghanistan (including members of Parliament) and the international community, including the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission. The first time the conference was held was on 28 June, and it was well received by all attendees. The conference will continue to convene on a quarterly basis with the objective to establish a direct dialogue with the Afghan population's representatives to address people's concerns and explain ISAF activities and progress in protecting the population. The ISAF headquarters also established the civilian casualties mitigation working group to examine policies and procedures, use of the civilian casualty tracking cell, the joint incident assessment teams and the mobile training teams visiting regional commands. There is still an important strategic message that the insurgents' indiscriminate use of improvised explosive devices and suicide bombers accounts for the majority of civilian casualties while ISAF remains committed, as a fundamental part of its counter-insurgency campaign, to keep reducing civilian casualties.

Counter-narcotics

21. With a significantly higher number of discoveries and confiscations of poppy seed (152,073 kg) and opium (23,095 kg) compared to the same period last year and also the first part of 2011, the reporting period can be considered successful and proves that the Afghan National Security Forces and ISAF increased fruitful security operations. These successes will further limit the insurgents' access to funding from the drug "business". The most significant change in the opium economy in Afghanistan in 2011 is the spike in the opium price. However, the dramatic rise in opium price did not generate a uniform response from farmers. While some were incentivized to re-enter or increase poppy cultivation, a significant

number of farmers found that they could maintain the 2010 levels of cultivation (both for poppy and food crops), and still see an increase in their revenues.

22. An in-depth look into the factors that determine opium production in the 2010/11 opium season showed that there is a correlation between poppy cultivation, the level of security, the degree of governance and the level of economic development. Communities that are secure and located close to provincial centres where the government is not contested, and where economic development has picked up, display little interest in returning to poppy cultivation. Consequently, in the areas where the government has not been able to establish an uncontested presence, and provide enough security to enable the promotion of economic development, communities display a significant level of stress, which has been exploited by the Taliban to expand their basis of support.

23. ISAF continues to work closely with actors of the international community to better tailor its assistance to the comprehensive Afghan counter-narcotics strategy, while refining their understanding of the linkages between narcotics trade and the insurgency. ISAF support efforts attempt to ensure that Afghans understand that involvement in the illegal narcotics activities that enslaves fellow Afghans is un-Islamic, like many other insurgent activities.

Governance

24. During the reporting period, the NATO Senior Civilian Representative Office, with support of Dr. Ghani and Provincial Reconstruction Team nations, agreed on a concept document on the evolution of the Provincial Reconstruction Team. It envisages Provincial Reconstruction Teams evolving to technical assistance units that will hand over their functions to either the Afghan local administrations or to other stakeholders, such as NGOs. The speed at which Provincial Reconstruction Teams transition from their current role will vary from place to place. This paper "PRT Evolution: Principles of and Guidelines for Provincial Reconstruction Team Evolution" take into account the following six principles laid out by the ISAF Commander:

(1) Adjust focus from service delivery to capacity development;

(2) Change Provincial Reconstruction Team composition to enable change in focus;

(3) Reduce Provincial Reconstruction Team size slowly, but steadily;

(4) Ensure rewards and incentives for transition;

(5) Identify and execute high-profile projects at the start of transition;

(6) Put progressively more funding "on budget" through the central government.

These agreed principles are intended to ensure that Provincial Reconstruction Team stakeholders have a coherent approach on how to increase their focus on building Afghan capacity.

25. The Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission is making steady progress in its efforts to recruit and train civil servants based on merit. Recently, 12 Deputy Provincial Governors were selected by the Commission and appointed by President Karzai, while 14 additional provinces began the merit-

based selection process this week. Similar efforts are under way to appoint qualified District Governors throughout the country, with 38 District Governors selected last month based on merit.

26. In order to increase its outreach to the Afghan population, ISAF's Task Force Shafafiyat ("Transparency") established a directorate mandated to engage with civil society organizations, including media organizations, universities, Afghan NGOs and potentially, religious leaders. By fostering dialogue about corruption and its effect on society, Task Force Shafafiyat aims at supporting the empowering of civil organizations to counter corruption within their capabilities. Ongoing discussions among various civil society entities are seeking to identify opportunities to form a coalition of civil society in order to lobby for improved transparency and freedom of information from the Government of Afghanistan.

27. As at 15 July, 14 of the 22 names submitted by the Afghan Government to the Security Council Taliban sanctions Committee for de-listing had been approved. The de-listed names include four members of the High Peace Council. De-listing ex-Taliban from the Security Council resolution 1267 sanctions list is seen as an important confidence-building measure and proof for the Taliban that the international community and the Government of Afghanistan are serious about reconciliation. Recognizing the international community's desire to see reintegration accelerate with this move, Minister Stanekzai counselled patience; the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Programme's capacity is increasing, but it is a complex programme that is striving to settle long-standing grievances on a village-by-village basis.

28. By the end of July, the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Programme had formally reintegrated more than 2,300 insurgents, up from around 1,150 at the end of March. While the majority of reintegration activity has so far been focused in northern Afghanistan, in recent months there have been increasing trends towards reintegration in southern and eastern Afghanistan. This increased momentum in the South and the East can be explained by renewed local political support for the reintegration process. In June, the Financial Oversight Committee approved the Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Programme budget for the year 2011-2012. Approving the Programme budget was an important step in the reintegration process, as it will allow funding to start flowing down to the provinces.

Development

29. During the reporting period, the development efforts of the Government of Afghanistan supported by ISAF and the international community have continued to improve Afghan social and strategic infrastructure. Short-term economic growth trends remain positive, although a recession will possibly occur in the wake of any ISAF troop drawdown and declining international donor support. Noteworthy points from the reporting period are:

- According to the Ministry of Education, 8.3 million students are currently enrolled in primary and secondary schools. This represents an increase of 500,000 enrolled students from the 2010 school year. Nevertheless, over 4.5 million children are still not enrolled in school owing to unavailability of teachers, and security conditions in the most remote areas;

- Efforts from the Ministry of Public Health continued to expand the availability of basic health services towards the goal of provided services to 90 per cent of the population by 2013. In the past two months alone, 33 health centres opened across the country, bringing the nationwide total to more than 2,000. Women's access to health services has steadily increased, although the continued shortage of female health-care providers limits access for women in some areas. In response, the Ministry of Public Health has emphasized midwifery schools and female enrolment in health profession programmes;

- Despite notable progresses observed in road, rail, air, power, water, borders, aviation and information communications technology (ICT), operations and maintenance mechanisms and regulatory authorities need to be developed in the short term, with ISAF support, if necessary, to enhance their sustainability;

- Efforts to exploit Afghanistan's mineral resources have the potential to generate significant economic growth and government revenues, though not expected before 2014. In May, the World Bank approved a $52 million project to strengthen the Ministry of Mines capacity to manage rapid and large-scale foreign direct investment in the mining sector;

- Nonetheless, regarding the economic governance, the Kabul Bank crisis, which induced a delay in reaching an agreement on a new International Monetary Fund country programme could hinder the international community's willingness to support the Government of Afghanistan;

- After months of negotiating, the Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement is now operational, with stakeholder agreement on bonding guarantees for trucks transiting through Pakistan. However, it remains a work in progress until the parties work out a means for implementation.

30. The inexorable link between security, governance and development was once again highlighted during the reporting period. Simultaneous steps forward in all three areas are required in order to support transition to Afghan lead for security in 2014 and ultimately to enable them to effectively assume responsibility for their country.